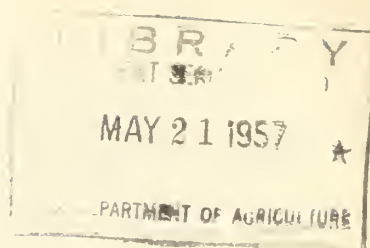


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DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMERCIAL POULTRY SLAUGHTER REPORT



— IMPROVING MARKET NEWS THROUGH MARKETING RESEARCH —

by Fred L. Faber, agricultural economist
Market Organization and Costs Branch

The commercial broiler and turkey industries have grown rapidly in the United States since World War II. With this expansion has come a demand from the industry for more complete market news on the movement of poultry from farms into trade channels.

In 1953 market research was undertaken by the U. S. Department of Agriculture to provide this information. The Commercial Poultry Slaughter Report was developed through research and became a regular service of the Dairy and Poultry Market News Branch, Agricultural Marketing Service, on July 1, 1956.

Basically, the report indicates the movement of poultry from farms into trade channels. It provides estimates of total movement, trends in week-to-week slaughter, and holding and speeding up of the marketing of farm flocks. It also gives some indications of culling rates, when used as a supplement to other data, such as numbers of birds on farms.

The report covers 8 classes of poultry slaughtered in large plants in the United States. It is designed to provide current information to aid poultry producers, processors, dealers, and others in making marketing decisions. The weekly report is issued only 5 days after the end of the week it covers.

The USDA's Dairy and Poultry Market News published reports on "Egg and live poultry receipts at primary markets--Central West," from 1929 to 1952. Interest in more complete information developed later mainly because of the rapid expansion of the commercial broiler industry, mostly outside of the Central West, and the decline of the relative position of turkey production in the southern part of the Central West.

Figure 1.--The poultry line in a slaughter plant.



Research was undertaken to improve the old series or to provide a new one that would better meet the needs of the poultry industry. In the fall of 1953, a mail survey was made to determine the needs of the industry and its ability to furnish various types of data. This information was analyzed, and in January 1954 weekly collection of poultry slaughter data began. A report has been issued each week since that time.

The Market Organization and Costs Branch, Marketing Research Division, AMS, did research from January 1954 to July 1956, on the kinds and types of data that would be accurate and most useful in showing the movement of poultry into trade channels. In this period, more than 6,000 names of possible poultry slaughterers were checked by both mail and field surveys. The surveys were to determine whether these plants slaughtered poultry and, if so, the kinds of poultry slaughtered, average weekly volume, and similar information. As of July 1, 1956, this work resulted in the identification of 691 large plants and 1,539 small plants, or a total of 2,230 poultry slaughterers.

The large plants slaughtered from 30,000 to more than 1,000,000 pounds a week, and averaged 118,000 pounds a week in 1955. The small plants slaughtered from less than 100 up to 30,000 pounds a week and averaged 4,400 pounds a week.

The decision to separate the large and small plants at the slaughter level of 30,000 pounds a week was made for several reasons. Locating and maintaining information on volume of slaughter, on a weekly basis, for the small plants is difficult and expensive. Nearly all plants slaughtering more than 30,000 pounds of poultry a week have overhead mechanical conveyor systems and operate 2 or more days a week. Most smaller plants employ manual methods. The large plants slaughtered an estimated 75 percent of the poultry sold off farms in 1955 and undoubtedly an even higher percentage of the poultry entering commercial trade channels. The cost of collecting and summarizing data each week is high. This cost is reduced when the information collected is limited to the large plants. A knowledge of the volume of slaughter, total number, and type of plants is necessary to secure accurate estimates from a sample. Also a higher degree of confidence can be placed in estimates when characteristics of the plants are known. These major considerations led to the following definition of commercial poultry slaughtering plants: "All plants which slaughter at least 30,000 pounds of poultry, live weight, per week on the average while in operation."

As of July 1, 1956 there were 479 plants providing data needed for the report. These plants accounted for 69 percent of the plants and 75 percent of the weekly volume of slaughter of all plants that qualified for the definition of "commercial plants." During the research, various methods of expanding the data collected from the sample of reporting plants were tried to arrive at an estimate of total slaughter for all plants. The method finally chosen resulted in classification of the plants into five groups. The groups were selected on volume of slaughter in individual plants, and variability of slaughter in the major types of poultry slaughtered. The statistical series on slaughter produced by this estimating procedure is available in the current weekly reports.

As noted earlier the estimates of poultry slaughtered in commercial plants during 1955 accounted for 75 percent of the poultry sold off farms as reported by the Agricultural Estimates Division, AMS. For the major kinds of poultry the percentages were: Commercial broilers, 89 percent; all young chickens, 80 percent; hens and cocks, 65 percent; and turkeys, 69 percent. The remainder presumably is slaughtered on farms, in small slaughtering plants, and by consumers, and probably is consumed near the point of slaughter. Thus, the poultry slaughtered in large plants accounts for much more than 75 percent of the poultry entering commercial trade channels.

Who Uses the Report

Analysis of the regular mailing list for the report reveals that it is used by: Poultry producers; hatcheries; feed-dealers and manufacturers; poultry slaughterers; manufacturers of soups, canned poultry, and frozen poultry pies; wholesale dealers and distributors; brokers; trade analysts, forecasters, and planners, trade associations, trade newspapers and magazines; State departments of agriculture; county agents and extension specialists; teachers; and libraries. The information is also published in trade newspapers, magazines, and house organs.

How the Report is Used

Although it is difficult to determine exactly how marketing information is used, a sufficient

number of comments have been received to show that the report is used in at least the following ways. Some producers use it in making their decisions on the time to place orders for chicks and poults, and on the size of flock to raise. Poultry slaughterers, brokers, and dealers, use it in making marketing decisions concerning buying, selling, and storage. Trade associations use it in their letters to members. Trade newspapers and magazines publish the data in part or in whole. Extension workers and teachers use it in educational and information work. Some government agencies use it as a basic series upon which other statistics are prepared.

Table 1.—Estimated commercial poultry slaughter, live weight, United States, by weeks, 1956 ^{1/}

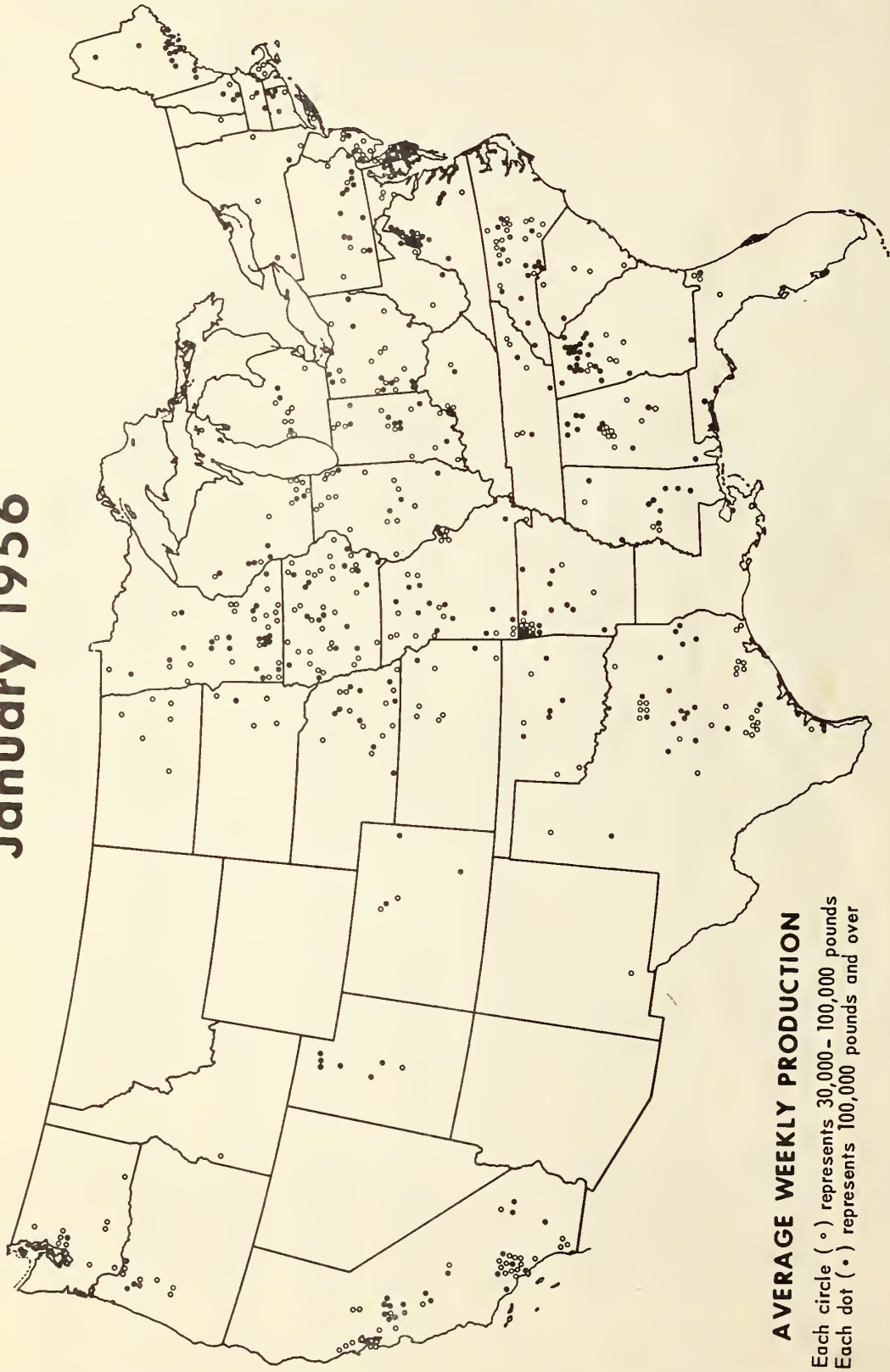
Week ending	Chickens			Turkeys					Other poultry		All poultry
	Young, all	Hens and cocks	Total	Fryer- roasters	Heavy breed		Light breed hens and toms	Total	Ducks	Geese	
					Hens	Toms					
	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds
Jan. 7	53,717	5,983	59,700	355	258	3,911	209	4,733	147	2	64,582
14	63,038	6,017	69,055	617	179	2,967	312	4,075	150	2/	73,280
21	67,176	5,205	72,381	577	186	2,707	215	3,685	152	2/	76,219
28	63,691	5,270	68,961	458	224	2,381	146	3,209	141	2/	72,311
Feb. 4	59,514	6,227	65,741	420	193	1,564	192	2,369	150	2/	68,260
11	58,273	7,004	65,277	538	198	712	266	1,714	146	2/	67,137
18	61,768	6,214	67,982	964	147	748	213	2,108	133	2/	70,223
25	63,002	5,431	68,433	475	85	476	55	1,091	138	2/	69,663
Mar. 3	62,090	5,513	67,603	811	80	294	281	1,466	160	-	69,230
10	60,442	5,530	65,972	927	61	513	114	1,615	111	2/	67,698
17	62,131	4,891	67,022	1,561	73	265	460	2,359	244	-	69,625
24	62,119	6,243	68,362	1,963	100	190	298	2,551	220	2/	71,133
31	63,313	6,623	69,936	1,954	210	192	448	2,804	314	-	73,054
Apr. 7	61,930	5,066	66,996	968	238	77	146	1,429	408	2/	68,833
14	69,927	5,055	74,982	1,525	275	148	232	2,180	481	2/	77,643
21	72,835	5,955	78,790	1,471	309	117	391	2,288	1,261	2/	82,339
28	67,840	6,701	74,541	1,969	712	282	245	3,208	1,217	2/	78,966
May 5	71,040	8,112	79,152	1,874	884	416	340	3,514	1,239	2/	83,905
12	75,173	7,426	82,599	2,242	1,903	713	473	5,331	1,443	-	89,373
19	72,414	7,503	79,917	1,683	2,813	791	963	6,250	1,316	2/	87,483
26	79,427	7,792	87,219	2,477	2,822	835	444	6,548	1,330	2/	95,097
June 2	69,306	7,830	77,136	1,164	3,648	665	334	5,811	1,386	2/	84,332
9	80,908	9,531	90,439	1,464	2,986	822	385	5,657	1,474	2/	97,570
16	83,362	8,785	92,147	1,859	3,058	951	714	6,582	1,374	-	100,103
23	80,831	10,089	90,920	1,841	3,016	705	514	6,076	1,416	4	98,416
30	85,061	11,009	96,070	2,505	2,425	1,105	294	6,329	1,396	-	103,795
July 7	66,998	8,970	75,968	1,832	2,176	770	437	5,215	1,262	-	82,445
14	77,846	11,189	89,035	2,806	3,161	1,270	366	7,603	1,584	-	98,222
21	76,433	9,283	85,716	3,045	3,204	2,192	742	9,183	1,279	3	96,181
28	78,007	9,510	87,517	2,802	4,083	3,101	781	10,767	1,226	6	99,516
Aug. 4	81,057	10,412	91,469	2,983	4,839	4,103	615	12,540	1,416	-	105,425
11	84,035	12,851	96,886	2,733	6,270	5,234	997	15,234	1,240	-	113,360
18	87,171	12,934	100,105	2,231	8,074	5,862	1,077	17,244	1,148	105	118,602
25	84,646	14,224	98,870	2,930	9,424	5,839	876	19,069	1,221	-	119,160
Sept. 1	85,608	16,741	102,349	3,383	9,255	10,338	889	23,865	1,012	-	127,226
8	79,928	14,383	94,311	3,202	10,392	11,574	1,352	26,520	1,239	-	122,070
15	91,976	16,065	108,041	3,339	13,275	14,522	1,685	32,821	1,331	-	142,193
22	83,559	15,705	99,264	3,323	12,746	13,681	2,024	31,774	1,074	-	132,112
29	80,487	18,521	99,008	4,069	12,132	15,151	1,776	33,128	923	-	133,059
Oct. 6	86,126	17,200	103,326	3,755	12,494	18,932	4,065	39,246	876	-	141,448
13	85,983	18,510	104,493	3,393	14,623	25,652	1,244	44,912	788	-	150,193
20	82,728	15,016	97,744	3,911	13,217	29,336	1,369	47,833	630	-	146,207
27	81,804	15,047	96,851	4,185	14,080	29,723	1,097	49,085	602	-	146,538
Nov. 3	83,501	16,364	99,865	3,207	11,886	30,728	1,995	53,816	505	84	154,270
10	85,600	14,410	100,010	4,155	14,440	39,009	1,441	59,045	359	203	159,617
17	68,528	14,198	82,726	5,252	21,935	42,927	2,054	72,168	417	332	155,643
24	47,366	10,896	58,262	2,552	10,816	27,594	1,261	42,223	281	322	101,088
Dec. 1	75,039	13,040	88,079	3,872	9,705	30,165	1,499	45,241	261	369	133,950
8	88,799	13,001	101,800	3,018	11,275	29,635	1,644	45,572	268	271	147,911
15	78,579	12,616	91,195	2,407	10,005	28,964	2,753	44,129	258	170	135,752
22	66,772	11,629	78,401	2,775	9,184	22,860	1,518	36,337	260	22	115,020
29	57,359	6,920	64,279	555	1,957	6,715	685	9,912	225	16	74,432

^{1/} Revised. For purposes of this report only, a commercial poultry slaughter plant is defined as a plant which slaughters at least 30,000 pounds live weight per week on the average while in operation.

^{2/} Less than 500 pounds.

COMMERCIAL POULTRY SLAUGHTERING PLANTS

January 1956



AVERAGE WEEKLY PRODUCTION

Each circle (○) represents 30,000 - 100,000 pounds
Each dot (•) represents 100,000 pounds and over

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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Figure 2.